IMAGINE A LINE TO THE AFTERLIFE

THAT'S WHAT MITCH ALBOM DOES IN HIS NEW BOOK. PAGE 13

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Tuesday, December 3, 2013 www.metro.us | t:MetroPhilly | f:MetroPhilly

Bill aims to ban dog and cat consumption

What's now legal. Killing a dog or cat humanely for food is legal in Pennsylvania. **What could be coming.** A bill passed the state house that would ban breeding and killing dogs and cats for their meat. **It does happen.** PSPCA officials busted a local restaurant earlier this year for serving cat meat. PAGE 04

MGMT won't be boxed in

PAGE 12

Benjamin Goldwasser, left, and Andrew VanWyngarden prepare to rock the Electric Factory tonight. / PROVIDED

Movember reign: 2013 in 'staches

PAGE 10

Voyage to the moon via Mexico

PAGE 14

The Top 5 worst toys of the year

PAGE 15

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1 NEWS

Top 3

What's trending at Metro.us

1 'Chefs dish on their perfect last meals'

2 'VIDEO: Bullying experiment shows most people won't help out'

3 'VIDEO: Amazon introduces delivery drones'

Local Tweet

"Just did some cyber Monday shopping in the library # #whats homework?"

Hope @kingdom361 is on scholarship! #whatareloans

Giving Tuesday: A day to give back in Philly

Sick of shopping? Volunteers are needed for charitable groups and nonprofits around the Delaware Valley.

More than 100 nonprofits and community organizations in the city will be participating in a new holiday today: Giving Tuesday.

Giving Tuesday was founded last year as the antidote to the post-Thanksgiving Christmas shopping spree.

"Giving Tuesday is the opposite of that," said Rudy Lesher, coordinator for Giving Tuesday Philadelphia. "It's bringing people back to what they're really interested in, which is giving back to their communities."

Philadelphia groups using the hashtag #GivingTuesdayPHL on social media are spreading the word about volunteer opportunities and charities that need help this holiday season. Most groups are asking for donations, but some are asking people to volunteer their time and help out with various projects.

Among the ideas sparked by Giving Tuesday are a Community Legal Services of Philadelphia photo project. People are asked to send in photos that depict justice or injustice, which will be included in an online album posted Tuesday.

"We were trying to include people who wanted to give back a little bit, but can't necessarily make donations," said CLS development associate Caitlin Brown. "I hope this project brings awareness to the cause."

ACHIEVEability, which offers housing to single parents who are going back to college, is holding a special Giving Tuesday volunteer session during which they will rehab 20 to 30 houses.

"As a small nonprofit, we could of course use funds as well, but this is a much more fun way to give, we think," said PR consultant Evon Burton.

Philadelphia was recognized by The White House blog, along with Baltimore and Bucks County, as the only municipalities in the country with an organized Giving Tuesday effort.

SAM NEWHOUSE
sam.newhouse@metro.us

Volunteer

Just show up and help out at these locations:

- Donate non-perishable foods: Rittenhouse Market, 1733 Spruce St., and South Square Supermarket, 2221 South St.
- Donate or sort toys at 1880 JFK Blvd., 19th floor, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.
- Tutor kids from 4 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. at Lenfest Center, 3890 N. 10th St.

No shortage at the Christmas Village

Hani Mikhail of the Unique Store wraps a Christmas decoration for a shopper at the Christmas Village at Love Park over the weekend. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

Fat Salmon. Workers get $40K settlement in wage theft case

Owners of Fat Salmon have settled this week with five former employees who accused the Center City sushi restaurant of engaging in wage theft.

The $40,000 settlement comes just seven months after three of those workers initially went on strike, joined later by two others who said some of their gratuities were withheld.

"We're definitely satisfied with this," said Fabricio Rodriguez, of nonprofit workers group Restaurant Opportunities Center. "The owner of Fat Salmon — once we went public — really did everything in his power to fix the situation quickly."

The workers had alleged the restaurant illegally withheld between 3 and 30 percent of the tips earned. In 2011, the Gratuities Protection Bill made that practice illegal.

"It parallels what the Department of Labor has also found: two-thirds of people have suffered some form of wage theft," Rodriguez said.

CHRISTINA PACIOLLA

Quoted

"This is one small example of something that is really widespread in our city."

Rodriguez
On the issue of wage theft

Resignation

CEO Luukko leaves sports arena company

PETER LUUKKO
GETTY IMAGES

Peter Luukko, long-time president and chief operating officer of Comcast-Spectacor, resigned his position.

The Philadelphia-based sports and entertainment company, which owns and manages the Wells Fargo Center, as well as other venues in the Delaware Valley, named retired Comcast Cable executive Dave Scott as its new president.

Gary Rostick, who recently served as CFO of Comcast Business Services, was appointed the new chief financial officer.

All changes are effective immediately.

Luukko, who spent 25 years with the company, will cash in his stake in the company. He started with the company in 1981 and assumed the role of president in 1993. He is credited with expanding the company's national profile.

Comcast-Spectacor, which is controlled by Comcast, is chaired by Ed Snider. **METRO**

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Eating canine, feline meat could be illegal

Butchered. It's legal to kill and eat cats and dogs as long as it's in private residences — for now.

George Bengal won't give the name of the West Philadelphia restaurant that served cat meat.

"But when we went in with the warrant," said Bengal, director of law enforcement for the Pennsylvania SPCA, "they had over 50 cats chained in the basement and the individual was actually butchering the cats when we walked in."

The SPCA cleaned out the stock and the health department shut the restaurant down.

And here's why: In Pennsylvania, it is illegal for restaurants to sell and serve cat or dog meat. However, it is legal for a citizen to kill a dog or cat and eat it, as long as it is butchered humanely and done in their own homes.

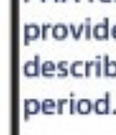
"When you tell the average layperson that you were allowed to eat dogs and cats and, most people were appalled," Bengal said. "They thought there was a law already in place."

That may change. Rep. John Maher (R-Allegheny/Washington) introduced the bill to ban in October, and it passed the state house this week. If passed in Senate, it would be illegal to breed and kill dogs or cats just to eat their meat.

While not many incidents of pet slaughter are reported, the SPCA points to the "private" aspect of the law, which they say makes it difficult to pin offenders down.

But Bengal said the urban enclave of Philadelphia is where the SPCA receives the most reports. And as word spread of the legality of the kill, opposition has grown.

According to the legislation, violation of the law would bring a $10,000 fine and five years in prison.



TOMMY ROWAN
tommy.rowan@metro.us

In Asian counties

Dogs and cats are a delicacy

In certain cultures, dogs and cats are a delicacy, Bengal said.

Many Asian and third-world countries, where food is not as accessible, he continued, domestic animals are used for food.

"We're seeing it more and more only because the population change — everything is more diverse now. You have a lot more people from other countries living here and coming over here, and they bring their culture with them," Bengal said. "But here it's just not acceptable."

Quoted

"You have to treat domestic animals the best you can. I don't think they are being born to be eaten."

Rep. Michelle F. Brownlee (D-Philadelphia)

Iconic Center City event

Spectators take in the annual Christmas light show at Macy's in the Wanamaker building in Center City, a tradition that dates back to 1956. The show started last Friday and will last throughout the holidays with shows every two hours. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
PHILADELPHIA HOUSING AUTHORITY
MOVING TO WORK ANNUAL PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) is a participant in the Moving To Work Demonstration Program (MTW). PHA is soliciting public comments on its Moving to Work Annual Plan (Annual Plan) for PHA Fiscal Year 2015. The Annual Plan describes PHA's MTW proposed policy initiatives & activities for the period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015.

Copies of the draft Annual Plan are available for public review on PHA's website at www.pha.phila.gov under the "Latest News" section or may be picked up at the following locations:

PHA's Housing Choice Voucher Program Office
2850 Germantown Ave 1st & 2nd Floor

Scattered Sites Management Offices:
3417 Spring Garden St.
3218 Susquehanna Ave
1821 Vineyard Street
400 W. Huntingdon St.
3226 McMichael St.

Public Housing Management Offices:
Bartram - 5404 Gibson Drive
Raymond Rosen – 2110 N. 23rd St.
Wilson Park - 2500 Jackson St.
Blumberg - 2311 W. Jefferson St.

PHA residents, Housing Choice Voucher participants & the general public may provide oral comments on the draft Annual Plan by attending the public hearing described below and/or by submitting written comments during the comment period. A public hearing will be conducted at the following time & location:

Dec. 19, 2013, 10am until noon at the John F. Street Community Ctr. 1100 Poplar St.

Only comments pertaining to the draft MTW Annual Plan are being solicited. PHA may modify the draft Annual Plan based on comments received. The comment period begins November 29, 2013 at 12 noon & ends on December 30, 2013 at 12 noon. All comments must be received by the end of the comment period. Please send written comments to:

PHA, Policy, Research, and Enterprise Planning Office
Attention: MTW Comments, 1606 Swain St., Philadelphia, PA 19130

The public hearing is at an accessible location. If you require assistance, sign language interpreter or other accommodations, please call 215-684-4000. Please use the AT&T Relay Service for TTY.

Sentenced. Officer Lorenzo's killer gets 10 to 20 years in jail

The 48-year-old Bucks County man who pleaded guilty to killing a Philadelphia highway patrolman in a collision while under the influence of alcohol on an I-95 on-ramp last year will serve time in prison, reports say.

John Leck Jr., of Levittown, was sentenced Monday to serve 10 to 20 years in a state penitentiary.

Officials said Leck ignored several traffic signs and drove his 2010 Audi the wrong way on the I-95 Cottman Avenue exit ramp and collided with Officer Brian Lorenzo's motorcycle in the early hours of July 8, 2012. Lorenzo, a 23-year police veteran, was driving home from work.

In October, Leck pleaded guilty to third-degree murder, homicide by vehicle while driving under the influence and DUI. Since he had no prior convictions, the District Attorney's Office dropped the involuntary manslaughter and homicide by vehicle charges in exchange for the guilty plea.

A blood test revealed Leck's blood alcohol content was .218. **TOMMY ROWAN**

Quoted

"It's an unfortunate situation all the way around. There's no winner in here. This guy goes to jail and the verdict still doesn't bring Brian back. By all accounts, speaking with [Lorenzo's wife], she's happy that this part's over. ... She looks forward to moving on with her life and keeping Brian's memory alive."

John McNesby
President of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge No. 5

Staying safe this holiday season

Jim Dollard, safety director for the IBEW Local 28, warned about the increased fire dangers in homes around the holidays and suggested ways to reduce the risk. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

Toy drive

Tony's Metro Magic

Join Metro in giving to a local child in need this holiday season. Here's how: Look for the Tony's Metro Magic logo on our website, www.metro.us. One click on the logo will take you to a Wish List we have set up via a secure link on ToysRUs.com. Once there, you can see all the toys we've already requested for kids, with more being added daily. Simply select the toys you want and purchase them. That's it! Selecting only the toys on our Wish List ensures that all the gifts will be shipped to our offices. If you donate, email Metro at charity@metro.us, letting us know what you gave, and we'll print a "thank you" in the paper. **METRO**

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Earlier-than-usual online deals to steal Cyber Monday thunder

Analysts. Online sales at many chains may come up short thanks to big stores eschewing tradition this year.

The packaging department at an Amazon Fulfilment Center was less busy on Monday. / GETTY IMAGES

Earlier-than-usual online holiday discounts are expected to dampen Cyber Monday sales totals in the United States.

To compete with each other and powerhouse Amazon.com, many U.S. retailers began offering some of the season's best online deals, which were traditionally reserved for the Monday after Thanksgiving, several days ago.

That helped overall online sales from Thanksgiving through Sunday rise 14.5 percent in 2013 over the same period last year, data from IBM showed. But since shoppers have a limited budget, that could mean Cyber Monday might lose some luster once final sales are tallied.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., Target Corp., Toys R Us, Macy's Inc., J.C. Penney Co. Inc. and Best Buy Co. Inc. were among the brick-and-mortar chains that started their online deals early. REUTERS

Survey

23.5%

A survey by America's Research Group showed that 23.5 percent of participants planned to shop on Cyber Monday, down from 29.2 percent a year earlier.

17.3%

But online sales rose 17.3 percent on Thanksgiving and Black Friday.

Two turtle doves

Cost of 'Twelve Days of Christmas' gifts leaps in 2013

Buying a set of the gifts named in the classic holiday carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas" will cost a true love $27,393 this year, up 7.7 percent from the 2012 price tag, according to an annual tongue-in-cheek analysis released Monday.

Prices for most of the items in the song — including the partridge, two turtle doves, three French hens and five gold rings — remained steady from last year.

But the cost for 10 lords-a-leaping jumped 10 percent to $5,243, and nine ladies dancing increased by 20 percent to $7,553, PNC Wealth Management's Christmas Price Index showed.

Monitoring group

Syrian death toll hits nearly 126K people

The death toll in Syria's civil war has risen to at least 125,835, more than a third of them civilians, but the real figure is probably much higher, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Monday.

The pro-opposition monitoring group also appealed to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and "all people in the international community who have a conscience" to increase efforts to end the two-and-a-half-year war.

The conflict began as peaceful protests against four decades of rule by President Bashar al-Assad's family. But under a fierce security force crackdown, it turned into an armed insurgency whose sectarian dimensions have echoed across the Middle East. REUTERS

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7-Day Alaska $449* Fr. pp — Ocean View $599* Fr. — Balcony $1009* Fr.
9-Day Caribbean $499* Fr. pp — Ocean View $569* Fr. — Balcony $849* Fr.

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7-Day Bahamas $429* Fr. pp — Ocean View $629* Fr. — Balcony $669* Fr.
7-Day Alaska $519* Fr. pp — Ocean View $649* Fr. — Balcony $1069* Fr.
10-Day Caribbean $657* Fr. pp — Ocean View $924* Fr. — Balcony $1167* Fr.

Holland America Line — Receive up to $575 Onboard Credit, plus Free Dining, Wine or Champagne on select sailings
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7-Day Alaska $489* Fr. pp — Ocean View $589* Fr. — Suite $1549* Fr.
12-Day Europe $619* Fr. pp — Ocean View $689* Fr. — Suite $1459* Fr.
10-Day Panama $779* Fr. pp — Ocean View $879* Fr. — Balcony $1169* Fr.

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15-Day Hawaii $1099* Fr. pp — Ocean View $1199* Fr. — Balcony $1599* Fr.

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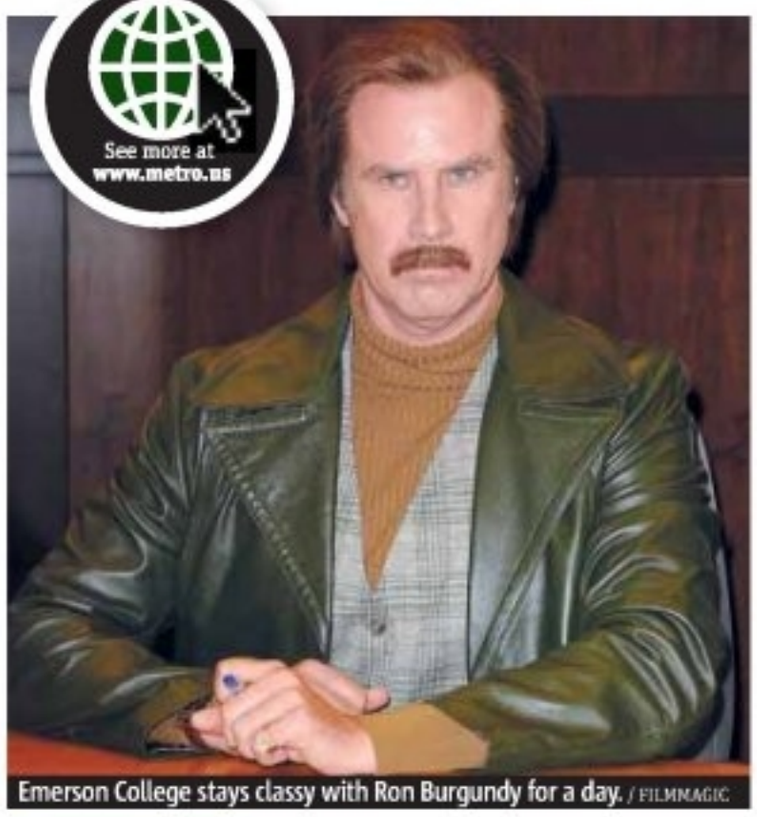
Study notes: Fun things on campus

Cool school. Class is in session with DJs, Ron Burgundy and more.



Emerson College stays classy with Ron Burgundy for a day. / FILMMAGIC

You stay classy, San Diego! Or in this case, Emerson College. On Dec. 4, the School of Communication will be renamed the "Ron Burgundy School of Communication" in honor of the goofy KVWN Channel 4 Action News TV star from "Anchorman." Burgundy (played by Will Ferrell) will share his journalism prowess with students and introduce a screening of "Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues." The school's dean, Phil Glenn, says, "This is just a fun chance to have a day of laughter. We're having a press conference where we give him a mock certificate naming the school in his honor for a day, he'll say something funny ... and in the evening there's a screening of the film for students." There's "tremendous excitement" on campus, he says. "We teach our students serious journalism. Journalism is about integrity and getting the facts right and telling a compelling story. That's often what comedy does — it reminds us of our values."

Tight-fisted

Alfred University students are getting their thrift on thanks to Emrys Westacott's honors evening course, Tightwaddery. The philosophy professor says the class lets students reflect on their values. "This should determine how much they need or want wealth," he says. The syllabus includes texts from Henry David Thoreau as well as books like Judith Schor's "The Overspent American." In addition to keeping a spending diary, the syllabus includes a yard sale field trip to discuss the ethics of haggling, plus a haircutting class. "Students learn that if a family of four [cuts] their own hair for say, 20 years, and socks away the money saved in a mutual fund, they can save six figures."

Professor MC

Spin class

Want to mix tunes like the big guns? Michael Peterson, marketing director at Hercules, known for its DJ consoles, says the Heavy Sound DJ prep class offered at CCNY as part of the Continuing and Professional Studies program is for students who are serious about the business. "It gives them an overall aspect of how to DJ and how to go into it professionally from a novice to intermediate." Hercules provides equipment and offers events where students DJ at venues around New York City, all while focusing on making it profitable.

VICKI SALEMI
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JON STEIN

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Jon Stein is the founder and CEO of Betterment.

With tax season right around the corner, many people have questions about investment taxes. Once you understand how they work, you'll see that investing can be a smart way to save money, even with taxes.

First, there is a difference between ordinary income tax (that's the tax that is imposed on the salary you earn) and investment income tax (the tax you pay on money you make through market returns). Investment income includes interest generated by bonds and dividends paid on stocks. When you sell such an investment for more than you bought it for, the difference is called capital gains, and is generally subject to capital gains tax.

Capital gains come in two buckets: there are short-term capital gains and long-term capital gains. Long-term capital gain results from selling investments held for more than a year, and, for now, is taxed at around 15 percent for the majority of taxpayers. This tax rate is relatively low as a way of incentivizing the risk that naturally comes with investing.

Short-term capital gain refers to income earned on an investment held for a year or less. This gain is taxed at a relatively higher rate (similar to ordinary income tax), which is the government's way of discouraging investors from flipping investments.

Every kind of savings or investment account has taxes. You pay income tax on all realized investment income, whether it's interest in a savings account or dividends in your investment portfolio.

There are no circumstances under which you'd be taxed more on a dollar of growth in market investments than in a savings account. But there are circumstances under which you'd pay less tax on the same return on your investments versus a savings account.

You only pay capital gains tax when you sell an investment that has risen in value. If it falls in value and you sell it, you get a capital loss, which can offset other gains, and you owe no tax.

Good news: You pay tax only on the gains, not on the full amount invested. / GETTY IMAGES, CREATAS RF

Comparing rates

What you'll pay

Though the exact rate depends on your income and marginal tax rate, the most the federal government would tax you on gains from short-term investments (held for a year or less) is your ordinary income tax rate (plus 3.8 percent for more affluent taxpayers).

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Holiday shopping by the numbers

Finance. Save more than the majority with these savvy money-savings tips.

If buying presents for everyone on your list has you stressing about your bank account, fear not, dear shopper. Metro has some sneaky insider shopping tips that will help you save money without looking like a grinch. Take a look at the below statistics on holiday shopping and find out how you can save while still checking off your list.

$750

Amount the average American spent on holiday presents and decorations last year. (National Retail Federation)
Insider tip: According to productivity consultant Brad Hines, the best way to save on buying gifts is to comparison shop. "Look for discounts online by Googling the item you want to buy and the word 'coupon,'" he tells Metro.

$421.62

The average amount a person spent on gifts for their family members last year, with an extra $75.13 for friends. (National Retail Federation)
Insider tip: "Set a limit on gifts family members will give each other," Hines advises. He also suggests signing up for daily deal sites like Living Social and Groupon in cities where your family members live. That way, you can give experience-based gifts or restaurant gift cards at a discounted rate.

Advice

"Look for discounts online by Googling the item you want to buy and the word 'coupon.'"
Brad Hines, productivity consultant

Worst day to shop

Dec. 23

The busiest shopping day of the year for Wal-Mart, Macy's and Kohl's. (Placed.com)
Insider tip: This one is pretty obvious: If you want to shop at one of the aforementioned stores, go before Dec. 22. Any later and you risk the items you want being out of stock.

4 out of 5

Shoppers research what they want to buy on the Internet. (CMO.com)
Insider tip: Of course people use the Internet to browse. But most might not know the best way to do their research. "Go to PriceGrabber.com and set up alerts for items you want, so you know if and when the price drops," Madhok advises.

60 percent

People who wanted a gift card for the holidays last year, beating out clothes, jewelry and even electronics. (National Retail Federation)
Insider tip: Shopping expert and SheFinds.com founder Michelle Madhok knows a legit way to score gift cards at a discounted rate: "Check out GiftCardGranny.com," she tells Metro. You can also sell gift cards you were given but don't want. Genius.

EMILY LAURENCE
emily.laurence@metro.us

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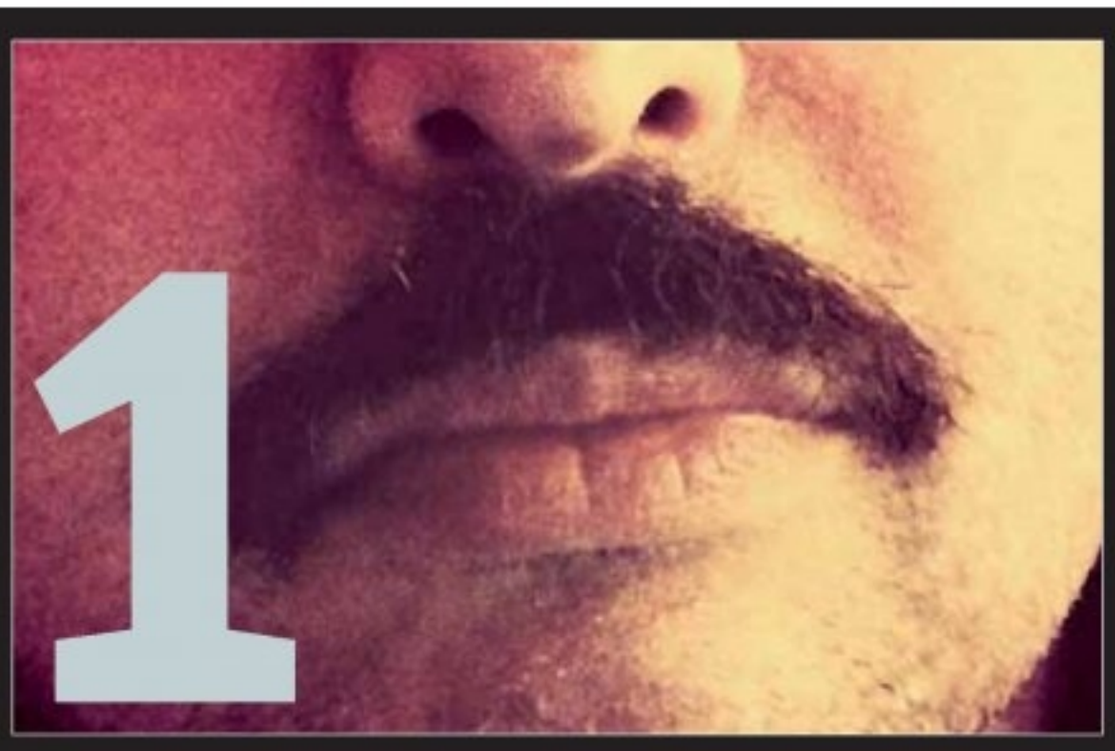
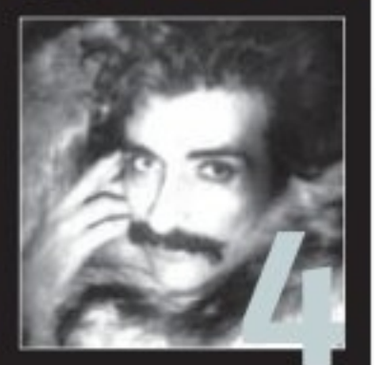
EQUAL HOUSING LENDER





Metro readers showed off their best #MetroStache for Movember

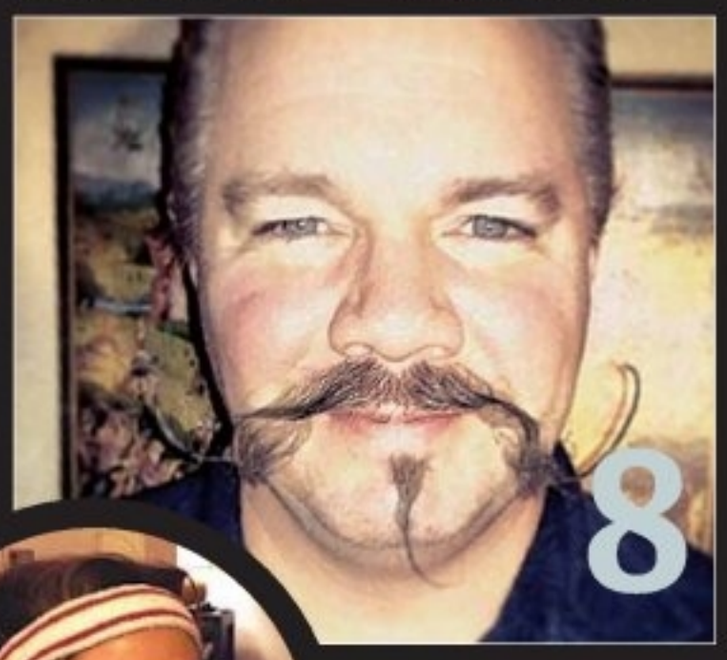
The worldwide campaign raised money for prostate cancer research and other men's health issues.

Men around the world sported extra facial hair during the month of November, raising donations and awareness of men's health issues as part of the Movember campaign.

In the U.S., about 219,000 men raised more than $18.6 million this year. Globally, nearly a million participants brought in just shy of $95 million in donations.

To help promote Movember, Metro asked readers to submit photos on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram of their #MetroStache. In Boston and Philadelphia, we're awarding a Braun 3Series 380S-4 Wet & Dry Shaver to a randomly-selected reader who sent us a photo. One New York reader is getting a gift from our co-sponsor, menswear retailer Heights + Kenchi.

Here are some of your #MetroStache photos — thanks for participating! METRO



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1 Was Walker drag racing when he died?

Details continue to emerge about the car wreck that killed "Fast and Furious" actor Paul Walker and his business partner, Roger Rodas, on Saturday — and they aren't pretty.

TMZ.com reports that cops are looking into the possibility that Walker and Rodas were drag racing when their Porsche exploded after first hitting a tree and then a lamppost. The area where they died is a well-known racing strip. In fact, TMZ reports that fans are "doing dangerous burn-outs, donuts and other high speed stunts" at the death site in memoriam of Walker.

Meanwhile, production for "Fast and Furious 7" "won't be scrapped," sources close to the production tell the Hollywood Reporter. Filming has been underway in Atlanta, taking a break for the Thanksgiving holiday. Sources say production will be "delayed" as they figure out how to re-work the project and "how to proceed in a manner that would be respectful to Walker's death."

THE WORD

Dorothy Robinson takes on the world of gossip.

DOROTHY ROBINSON
@dorothyatmetro
dorothy.robinson
@metro.us

Moss, over-the-hill? Not so fast

Everything's coming up Kate Moss this week.

First up, the supermodel, who turns 40 next month, was honored at the British Fashion Awards in London on Monday where she won a special award for her 25 years in fashion.

Second, her hotly-anticipated issue of Playboy hits stands on Friday. The 18-page spread features a Q-and-A with Moss and Tom Jones. Jones lobs softballs at the model (as you should when someone is naked) with such questions as, "Who would be on your ultimate guest list?"

If you're wondering, her list includes Catherine Deneuve, her husband and Hugh Hefner.

2 CULTURE

Twitter feed

Today, Lady Gaga is enjoying life on the road, Chloe Grace Moretz is looking to make her dreams come true and Jeremy Piven is not having a great time as a football fan.

@ladygaga: Rolled around Tokyo today, made it to my favorite shop. They asked me to paint a leather (an epic pastime of mine)

@ChloeGMoretz: had a weird dream after watching the new hunger games that i picked up archery and was like a championship archer. weird. need to buy a bow.

@jeremypiven: The good news is we are alive and not defined by our favorite sports teams (he said sobbing like a grandmother on the floor)

Come on out!

British Olympic diver Tom Daley and actress Maria Bello took to different forms of media this weekend to reveal new same-sex relationships.

Daley posted to YouTube to officially come out, telling fans that he has been dating a man for most of this year.

"Come spring of this year, my life changed massively when I met someone. And it made me feel so happy, so safe, and everything just feels great. That someone is a guy. It did take me by surprise a little bit. It was always in the back of my head that something like that could happen, but it wasn't until spring this year that something just clicked," he said.

Meanwhile, Bello told the world about her new girlfriend, Clare, in a first-person essay in the New York Times titled, "Coming Out as a Modern Family."

Jackson, Bello's 12-year-old son from a previous relationship, took his mother's new relationship in stride. When she told him, "He looked at me for what seemed like an eternity and then broke into a huge, warm smile. 'Mom, love is love, whatever you are,'" she wrote.

See more at www.metro.us

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MGMT

The psychedelic rockers' self-titled third album is a statement of identity: "We're presenting ourselves in the way we'd like to be seen."

'TIME TO PRETEND' IS OVER

Ben Goldwasser, left, and Andrew VanWyngarden are MGMT. / GETTY IMAGES

MGMT's Ben Goldwasser and Andrew VanWyngarden never wanted to be famous. But quirky, poppy zingers like "Kids," "Electric Feel" and "Time to Pretend" from their 2007 debut, "Oracular Spectacular," made them household names, especially after being featured in movies and TV shows. It was like an accidental open Facebook invitation had been issued to their private art-house jam session.

Rather than embrace the masses, the Brooklyn-based duo continued with an even more zany second album, "Congratulations," in 2010. "Kids" was no longer on the setlist.

This apparent fan neglect reads as career suicide; MGMT's paradoxical style can seem hipster, but they are out to please themselves. The 30-year-old rockers are backed by a major label (Columbia) and free to satiate their musical whims — something they've taken into their third album, "MGMT." Goldwasser chats about it.

You said your music has been misunderstood and labeled incorrectly in the past. Is this album about re-establishing your identity?

I feel like we're presenting ourselves in the way we'd like to be seen. It's a little strange to us that people want to impose a narrative on us as a band.

You get a lot of criticism for alienating your fans, but you've got nearly 4 million Facebook likes. Do you find it frustrating that critics and people keep harking back to the days of "Kids"?

We've never intentionally alienated anybody. We're people who appreciate lots of different music: catchy dance music, noisy industrial stuff and quiet, pretty music.

You just started tweeting in January. Why have you been resistant to embrace fans via social media?

I guess we just started doing it because we were bored in the studio and we were looking for something to do.

If you go

MGMT

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Mitch Albom talks tragedy and hope

Books. Mitch Albom's new book, "The First Phone Call From Heaven," will inspire you to make some calls.

Mitch Albom / PROVIDED

"Tuesdays with Morrie" author Mitch Albom isn't a fan of texting. "We text, we Facebook, we post. We do everything we can to avoid a conversation," Albom tells Metro.

But after losing a loved one, Albom insists that even for a society that prefers communicating digitally, it's real-life conversation that we long for most.

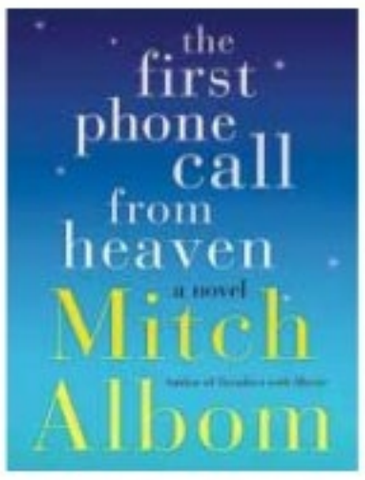
"There are so many people when they lose someone that wish they could have one more conversation," he says. The characters in Albom's latest book, "The First Phone Call From Heaven," are given exactly that chance.

The book is about a small town that starts receiving phone calls from heaven. Mostly, the book follows one man who was just released from prison after serving time for a crime he didn't commit. While in prison, his wife died, leaving him to raise his young son alone. When the boy starts asking when mommy is going to call, he can't bear for his son to have false hope, so he sets out to prove the whole thing is a hoax.

The idea for the book came after Albom lost the ability to have a conversation with his mother. "She suffered a stroke and lost the ability to speak," he says. "It's been more than three years since I've heard her voice. It occurred to me how precious the human voice is."

Promoting the book has prompted Albom readers to tell them their own stories about real-life phone calls from heaven. "One guy told me he got a phone call from his mother. She had died in a car crash," he says.

Albom believes miracles come in all forms and is no stranger to experiencing them himself. "There are so many good things that have happened to me that it can't just be coincidence," Albom says.



Sentimental favorites

Mitch Albom is known for tugging at heartstrings, so we asked the author what makes him tear up:

- **Movie:** "'It's a Wonderful Life.' I cry every time at the end."
- **Song:** "'The Very Thought of You.' Janine sang it to Morrie in his house."
- **Book:** "'Gilead' by Marilynne Robinson. It's just so beautifully written."

EMILY LAURENCE
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Cancun: Not just for coeds

If you go

Moon Palace Golf and Spa Resort

Moon Palace Cancun is a sprawling all-inclusive waterfront resort minutes from Cancun International Airport. Divided into three sections — Sunrise, Nizuc and Grand — each has its own character, landscape, demographic, restaurants and amenities. Once you put on a guest bracelet at check-in, you're not only given access to these "phases," which while walkable are connected by a lobby-to-lobby bus service, but you're also allowed to visit other Palace properties in the region. With seemingly limitless entertainment and dining options, the real party in Cancun happens here.

Moonpalacecancun.com

GINA ANGELOTTI
gina.angelotti@metro.us

This photo was taken at 8 a.m.; within an hour the pool was brimming with guests. / GINA ANGELOTTI

Destinations.
The real party is at this resort.

As the bellman explained the extensive features of our deluxe room at Grand, it became apparent that this resort was built with newlyweds in mind. With an in-room jacuzzi — standard for all suites — and a furnished patio, our accommodations were quite large for a single person. But it wasn't long before we took advantage of the cavernous marble shower, swimsuited up and set out for sunshine. While climbing stairs that led to the nearest pool, we almost stepped on one of dozens of sunbathing iguanas that would appear over three days.

Outstretched in a chaise under the shade of palm fronds and umbrellas, the heat was welcome. There were more chairs embedded in a shallow shelf of water along the pool's perimeter, and these prime seats were often occupied. But when the water gets to be too much, guests will be happy to know that Moon Palace has a spa, two salons and daily yoga in an on-site meditation garden. Even though it briefly rained each day, the side effects were positive: The loudest guests — mostly families — abandoned the deck, and the ocean breeze rolled in to whip our paperbacks' pages and the napkins under our cocktails du jour. Wash, rinse, repeat: We pool-hopped like this for the rest of the trip.

One afternoon at the Sunrise pool's coal-fired pizza oven, two newlyweds chit-chatted with other guests in line. An older woman advised the couple, "It only gets better." Smiling, the husband of the pair responded: "We've been here three days and each one has gotten better." The made-to-order pizza — and the camaraderie we felt — hit the spot. Among a crowd of spectators, our gaze turned to the pool's center stage as a DJ encouraged an 8-year-old to dance to LMFAO's "Sexy and I Know It." It's rare to see confidence (and hear applause) so pure.

Just beyond these pools is the quieter beachfront. Although a hefty bit of seaweed clutters the otherwise sea glass-green waters — not on par with the Mayan Riviera's reputation for pristine beaches — the sandbars are the temperature of bathwater and the sand itself is the softest we've bared our feet for. Each time we walked the shoreline, we shuffled through heart after heart etched in the sand. We caved and drew one, too.

"Have you ever been kissed by a Mexican?" asked Miguel, a trainer at Moon Palace's own dolphinarium, where guests get a show and a wet smooch from one of eight bottlenose dolphins. A professional photographer on hand means that you'll take home a souvenir portrait that's a step up from a smartphone selfie.

On the last evening of the trip, we had an unexpectedly exceptional meal at Los Tacos. At the poolside snack bar, surrounded by romantic canopied beds and mangroves, a flirty waiter brought us a heaping plate of nachos that we didn't actually order. But it didn't matter because the tortilla chips swimming in cheese, pork and pineapples were as gratifying as the Dos Equis we washed them down with.

Live at Moon Palace

- **Cirque Dreams Holidaze,** Dec. 20 through Jan. 6, 2014
- **Ricky Martin,** Dec. 28
- **Chicago,** Feb. 14-15, 2014

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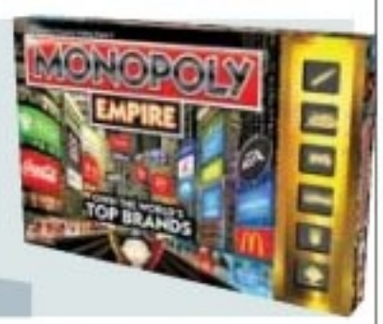
The worst toys of 2013

Before you head to Toys R Us in search of the best gift to give this holiday season, check out this list of the worst toys, released by the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood. This is the fifth year that CCFC has released its popular worst list, and you can vote for the biggest dud on its website, www.commercialfreechildhood.org. Here are the five finalists. **EMILY LAURENCE**

1 Monopoly Empire

The Monopoly franchise officially sold out this year with the release of Monopoly Empire, which is basically a clever way to advertise to kids. Players compete to buy Coca-Cola, Samsung and other brands instead of properties. It's product placement at its worst.



2 Play-Doh Create ABCs App

Um, sorry, but what fun is Play-Doh when you can't smell it, feel it or mold it? The Play-Doh app aims to teach kids the alphabet, but when all you are doing is tracing letters with electronic Play-Doh, it takes away all of the creativity and fun. The educational tool has its merit, but some toys just aren't meant to be apps.

3 The Real Tooth Fairies VIP Upgrade Membership

The Tooth Fairy gets a fashionista spin with this virtual game. Kids can use their "sparkle dollars" to buy their Tooth Fairy a closet full of outfits. Meanwhile, the money parents spend on this game is very real at $59 per year.

4 Imaginext Mega Apatosaurus

If only dinosaurs had armor and cannons like this toy, they would still be around. The battery-powered Apatosaurus can walk and shoot without kids even touching it — no playing or imagination necessary!

5 iPotty

Meant to teach toddlers how to use the toilet, the iPotty is a tablet on which kids can play games and watch videos while on the potty. Great, so your kids will finally want to go to the potty, but don't expect them to actually, you know, go. Shouldn't the bathroom be the one place where kids don't need electronics?

Editor's picks

Sucker for packaging? These new fragrances are for you. PROVIDED

AERIN

Aerin Lauder's new fragrance collection consists of five distinct scents that share some of the lifestyle maven's favorite experiences: summers in the Hamptons (Gardenia Rattan), cozied up fireside during a mountain retreat (Amber Musk) or dancing until sunrise (Evening Rose). Even if you haven't experienced the fabulous memories the Estee Lauder heiress is inspired by, one thing is for sure: Any one of these chic bottles, topped with a gorgeous stone cap, will add a jolt of glam to your shelves. And the boxes they come in, designed by famed textile firm Lee Jofa, are perfect for gifting. **$110 each, www.aerin.com**

Clinique

Finding the perfect nude shade for your skin tone — especially if you're a woman of color — is one of those make-up feats. That's why we are so impressed with Clinique. The brand, already know as one of the pioneer cosmetic companies to create foundations that cater to a range of skin tones, is launching the new 16 Shades of Beige Collection. Like Christian Louboutin's line of nude pumps, this limited-edition collection of nail enamels and shadows comes in a variety of beige and brown shades. Find the perfect one for you when they hit stores this month. **TINA CHADHA**

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EDUCATION TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT

How to ask your boss for flextime

To show you're still fully committed, stay logged on during office hours. / MONKEY BUSINESS, THINKSTOCK

Parenting. Want to work from home part-time? Here's how to do it.

Whether you have a toddler or an older child, it can seem like you never have enough time at home. Liz O'Donnell, author of "Mogul, Mom and Maid: The Balancing Act of the Modern Woman," tells Metro that no matter what your work-home situation is, talking to your boss about flextime is worth it and can be done. Here's how to do it.

Gauge your work culture

"A lot of companies boast about having flex benefits, but it might not be the true culture of the workplace," O'Donnell says. "If you look around and no one's doing it, it doesn't mean you shouldn't ask for it, but you could be frowned upon for taking them up on something they hoped nobody would."

Frame it as a win-win situation

Now comes the hard part: asking your boss. O'Donnell stresses it's important to point out what your employer will be getting out of the deal. "If you ask to work from home on Wednesdays, tell your boss how fully committed you'll be those days because it means not worrying about your kids being home alone, or whatever it is," she says.

O'Donnell also points out that your boss might have questions that will take you time to answer, so it may take more than one conversation. "Your boss may want to know how it is going to work, especially if you have clients or meetings. It may take several conversations to answer his or her questions."

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Flexibility goes both ways

If your boss gives you the go-ahead, it's important to actually work from home. "Marissa Mayer at Yahoo! pulled back her company's work-from-home policy because data showed people who said they were working from home weren't logged onto the server," O'Donnell says. "If you are expected to work 9 to 5, be logged on from 9 to 5."

O'Donnell also says you should be willing to come in for an important meeting even if it falls on a day you typically are at home. "You shouldn't say, 'Well, you had me come in on Wednesday, so now I'm going to switch my work from home day to Thursday this week,'" she says. "If you ask an employer for flexibility, you need to [give] flexibility back."

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Horoscope

♐ Sagittarius | Nov. 22-Dec. 21. Participate in a worthwhile cause. Offer your services, and you will be appreciated and rewarded.

♑ Capricorn | Dec. 22-Jan 20. Partners may cost you more than you thought. Refrain from making promises that are hard. Your tendency to overindulge should be curbed.

♒ Aquarius | Jan. 21-Feb 18. Educational pursuits will help you get a better job. Making a career move will pay off. Problems with a friend or relative should be handled swiftly.

♓ Pisces | Feb. 19-March 20. Delays due to red tape will be annoying. Leave plenty of time to sort through any problems. Lowered vitality may result.

♈ Aries | March 21-April 20. You'll enjoy all the options that come available to you. Embrace change and enjoy making new friends along the way.

♉ Taurus | April 21-May 21. A lack of sympathy will surface if you are stubborn. Use your skills diversely. This is an opportune time to show others what you are capable of doing.

♊ Gemini | May 22-June 20. Don't mix business with pleasure. You'll get more accomplished if you give your undivided attention to your focus.

♋ Cancer | June 21-July 22. An unique approach to something you already do well will give what you have to offer new life. Self-improvement will boost your confidence.

♌ Leo | July 23-Aug. 22. Choose your path and stay on course. A change will inspire you to try something new. Don't let someone's demands get you down.

♍ Virgo | Aug. 23-Sept. 22. A responsible attitude will get you a lot in return. Romance is on the rise and will help you ward off a problem you might face if you aren't attentive.

♎ Libra | Sept. 23-Oct. 22. Speak up. If you get your feelings out in the open, you will be able to deal with any problem you encounter.

♏ Scorpio | Oct. 23-Nov. 21. Participate in seminars, trade shows or anything that interests you. You'll be inspired by what you see and learn. BERNICE BEDE OSOL

Sudoku: Easy and hard

			7		5	4		6
			6		3			9
		4	9				3	2
7		1	8					
	2			7			8	
					2	9		1
1	7				4	5		
5			1		6			
8		2	3		7			

		3			2	8		
	2				5		4	
		5	6					
		6		7	1	5		
2	9		5		3		6	7
		1	2	9		4		
					7	6		
	6		1				9	
		7	8			3		

How to play
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Letters

Obama not a very good boss

Re: 'This is not your father's GOP' (Metro, Dec. 2) In his letter, Mr. J. Connell claims that the GOP wants only three things: One: The destruction of President Obama. If fighting against a man who has made the world less safe (Iran pact), drove the national debt up by trillions, kept the unemployment rate at just about 8 percent for five years and destroyed the best health system the world has ever known via Obamacare is wrong, then count me and millions of other Americans as happily wrong. Two: The elevation of the private sector over the public. Meet the new boss, Mr. Connell ... same as the old boss. You want to be a slave to some nameless bureaucrat who has his job because he/she passed a civil service test — be my guest. I'll take my chances with the private sector. Three: Reversing the last 50 years' worth of progress on social equality. The first female appointee to the Supreme Court, the first African-American appointed secretary of defense, the first female African-American appointed secretary of state, the first Hispanic attorney general of the U.S. were all made under Republicans.
TROY OWENS, VIA EMAIL

letters@metro.us

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Across
1 Thumper's friend
6 Wide valley
10 NFL broadcaster
14 Cook's attire
15 Hieroglyphics bird
16 Flight prefix
17 Stirs up
18 Weather maker (2 wds.)
20 "Becket" actor
22 Rooney et al.
23 Sure
26 Perjure oneself
27 Former Speaker Tip —
28 Snifter contents
33 Thin porridge
34 Boast about
35 Mr. in Bombay
36 Robin beaks
37 Moriarty's creator
38 Blocks, as a stream
39 Poker card
40 Fracas
41 Red-ink entry
42 Used up
44 Time of the mammals
45 "Exodus" hero
46 Linebacker, often
47 Metallic sound
50 Lookouts
52 Traveler's safety measure (2 wds.)
54 Enthusiasm
58 — out (withdraws)
59 Buffalo's lake
60 Grapevine item
61 Thrush's refuge
62 Phone bugs
63 Porch adjuncts

Down
1 Disqualify
2 PFC mail drop
3 Hi-tech scan
4 Thin cords, actually (2 wds.)
5 Hook up
6 Spicy mustard
7 Ferrara or Gance
8 Lo-cal
9 Hairpin curve
10 Pulled down
11 Sunflower product
12 Implore
13— de plume
19 Pollute
21 Fix a squeak
23 Warming spirits
24 Caruso's first name
25 Deli order
26 Narrow street
28 Sang to the moon
29 Wear the crown
30 Ms. Allende
31 Luxury fur
32 Wimple wearer
34 Field mouse
37 Half, in combos
38 Adorns (2 wds.)
40 Unclear
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43 Least wacky
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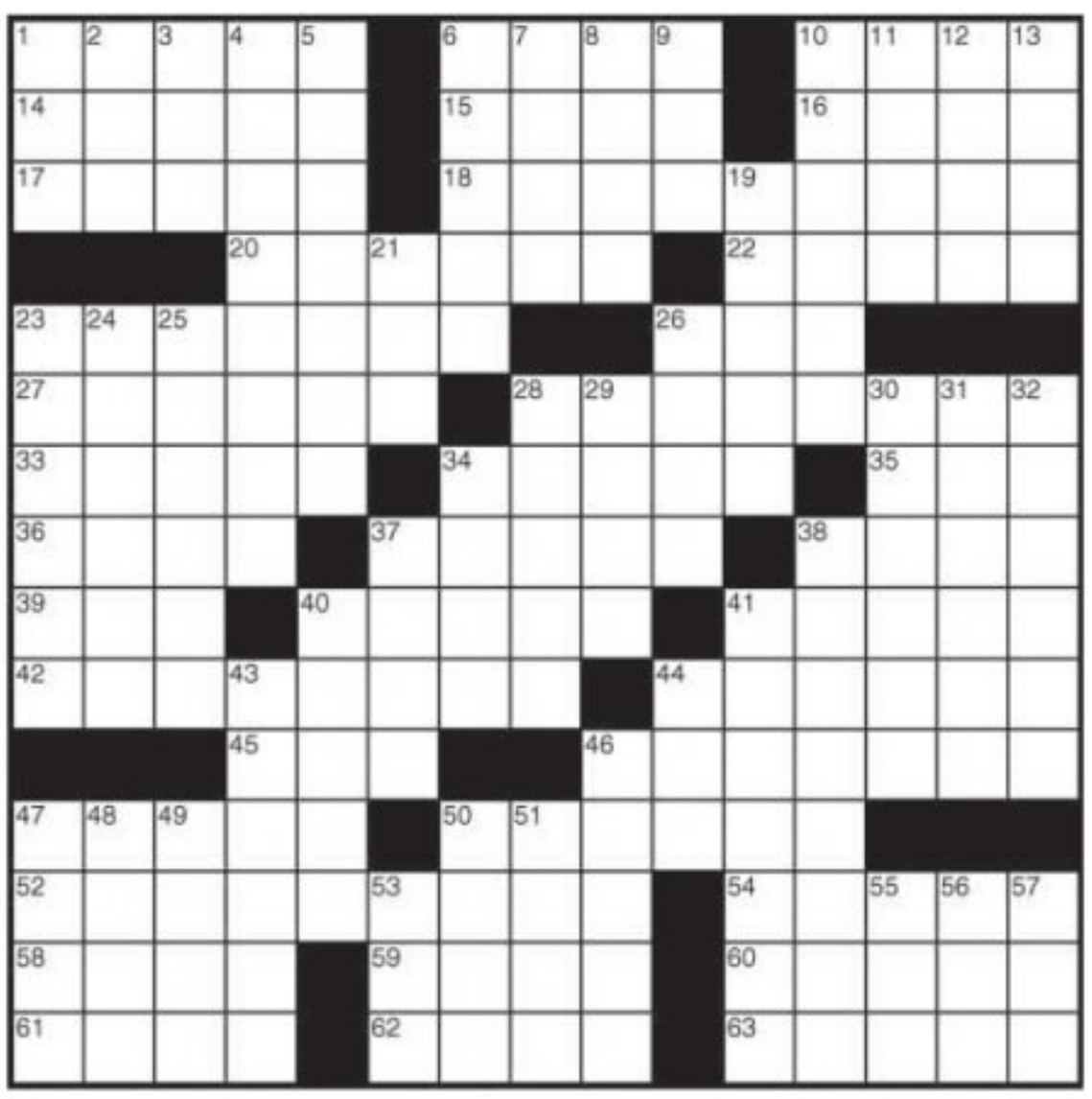

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3

SPORTS

A thousand years

Kelly jokes about Foles

The Eagles are set at quarterback for the rest of the season — and the next millennium. Chip Kelly joked Nick Foles will be "the starting quarterback for the next 1,000 years here" at his Monday press conference. He did later say he only "hopes" Foles is the QB of the future.

WINNING HAS BECOME EASY AS PIE FOR CHIP KELLY

The Eagles are on a magical four-game winning streak right now because head coach Chip Kelly is an inspirational leader, quarterback Nick Foles never makes critical mistakes, the defense is terrific under pressure and because I've been delivering pies to the NovaCare Complex.

Huh? Delivering pies? What does that have to do with the other perfectly logical reasons for a month of football success? Uh, nothing — unless you happen to be one of the millions of superstitious fans who refuse to tempt fate. Since I happened to bring a pecan pie to Kelly's office during a visit five weeks ago, they have demanded on my WIP radio show that I continue doing so until the Eagles lose.

Initially, I rebelled at the idea of confection perfection, but no more. Now I am embracing my pie karma, with deliveries every Wednesday. Why not? I really have no other logical explanation for a college coach turning a 4-12 team into a 7-5 playoff contender.

The 2013 Eagles are becoming one of the truly improbable sports stories of the past generation in Philadelphia. For example, here are the ratings of the top four quarterbacks in the NFL: Nick Foles, 125.2; Peyton Manning, 115.3; Aaron Rodgers, 108.0; and Drew Brees, 107.3. Foles, who wasn't even the best quarterback on his team three months ago, is the best in football right now.

Head coach Chip Kelly has had plenty of opportunities to smile this season, and not just because he's getting so much pie. / GETTY IMAGES

The Voice of Philly Sports

ANGELO CATALDI

And then there is the defense, which for two straight games has refused to surrender with the game in jeopardy. Imagine giving up an ungodly 412 yards per game — second-worst in the NFL — but an average of only 23 points. The Eagles are doing that this season, with their biggest stops coming in the biggest moments.

Cataldi on Kelly

Chip Kelly said if he accepted the words of naysayers, he would be shortchanging himself. You either believe in yourself or you don't. Kelly believes in his system, his players and himself.

Behind it all, of course, is Kelly, a man who is revitalizing football in Philadelphia while revolutionizing it throughout the NFL. As Arizona head coach Bruce Arians was sneering at Kelly's "college" offense last week, other NFL coaches were stealing pieces of it. Since Arians just lost, 24-21, to a college offense, what does that make him, a high school coach?

Kelly said something brilliant the other day when he was asked about his many critics in football. It was a lesson people can use in all walks of life. He said if he accepted the words of the naysayers, he would be shortchanging himself. You either believe in yourself or you don't. Kelly believes in his system, in his players and, above all, in himself.

As for me, I predicted nine wins and a playoff berth before the season started, but I will not pretend I saw Foles emerging this quickly, or the defense becoming a strength instead of a weakness, the amazing clutch punts of Donnie Jones or the resurgence of Trent Cole — or any of it, really.

When it comes to the Eagles, I am no expert these days. Until they lose, I have only one job now. I deliver the pies.

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Cataldi on the Sixers

Collins needs to be exposed as fraud he is

Collins did nothing but stunt the growth of former No. 2 overall pick Evan Turner. / GETTY IMAGES

Doug Collins came back to Philadelphia, made a bad team worse, insulted a fan base that revered him and left without even a small dent in his reputation. If you're looking for the biggest fraud in Philadelphia sports for 2013, you can stop the search now. It's Doug Collins.

The sad part about his infuriating three-year tenure as Sixers coach is that his mistakes keep reverberating through the organization, even though he is safely hidden away in an ESPN studio. A case in point is Nik Vucevic, the stud center who led Orlando to a thrashing of the Sixers last week in Orlando.

When Collins was here, he saw no point in developing his first-round draft pick, even though the coach had no other logical solution in the middle. Vucevic sat on the bench for most of the season, averaging 16 minutes in only 51 games. After the season, he was included in the disastrous Andrew Bynum trade.

The fact is, Collins was a horrible influence on all the young Sixer players. Just look at how much better Evan Turner is playing with Brett Brown in charge. Collins was also a lousy tactician, a moody leader and a sports figure who had no connection with the people rooting for his team. Do you know anyone else clueless enough to ask fans to pray for Bynum?

Collins had an excellent career as a player here, and his fiery style was a perfect fit for our city. But the statute of limitations on his good deeds has run out. It's time to see him for who he really was as a coach — one of the biggest phonies in Sixers history.

ANGELO CATALDI

Cataldi. Schilling's character should keep him from Hall

The new ballot for the Baseball Hall of Fame came out last week, and there he was in all of his blustery glory, back for a second try. Curt Schilling's candidacy is a very personal one for me, both because I admire his big-game talent and because I loathe everything else about him.

During his early days with the Phillies, he would call my WIP radio show often — usually unsolicited — and he appeared several times on my TV show, "The Great Sports Debate." Even then he believed his ability to throw a baseball 95 miles per hour somehow gave him an intellect to match.

I was never able to hide my contempt for Schilling because it was clear from the beginning he was the most shameless self-promoter in Philadelphia sports history — from the time he draped a towel over his head to call attention to himself in his rookie season all the way to his bloviating days in Boston and Arizona.

At the same time, though, his ability to perform brilliantly under pressure can never be understated. He won championships in two cities starved for the ultimate success, and he might have won another one if the Phillies had overcome their own deep distaste for him. When it mattered most, he was extraordinary.

In the end, though, I would not vote for him to join baseball's greatest players in Cooperstown only because the Baseball Hall of Fame incorporates character into the decision. After his baseball career, Schilling fleeced my home state of Rhode Island out of $75 million on his ill-fated video game company, a debacle for which he has displayed no genuine regret.

Curt Schilling was a winner in the game of baseball, but in the human race, he will always be at the back of the pack. ANGELO CATALDI

Idle thoughts

Here are a few other things eating at Angelo Cataldi this week.

- Just when you think you understand sports, a question like this one pops up: Who has more value in a trade right now, Washington's Robert Griffin III or Philadelphia's Nick Foles? A year ago, NFL experts would have scoffed at the notion. Today, they'd take Foles.
- Well, against all odds, it happened. Former Phillies pitching coach Rich Dubee got a job. He will be minor-league pitching coordinator in Atlanta, where his miserable demeanor should crush the hopes of the Braves pitchers of the future. Bravo.
- Much is being made of Jason Kidd's dropped-drink ploy and Mike Tomlin's near-tackle of an opponent running for an apparent touchdown. Yes, the Nets' and Steelers' coaches, respectively, violated the rules, but they did so in the spirit of winning at all costs. Good for them.

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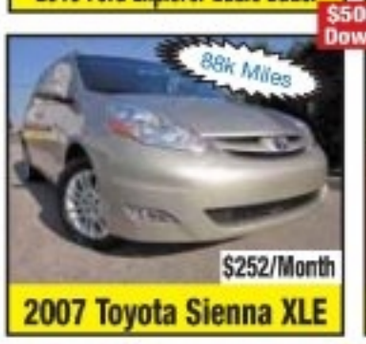

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Trent Cole breaking out when it matters

NFL. The veteran has moved to outside linebacker, but he's proving an old dog can still learn new tricks.

Cole was a steal as a fifth-round pick out of Cincinnati in the 2005 NFL Draft. / GETTY IMAGES

The haters were coming hard at Trent Cole early in the year.

In fact, the whispers started last season — after he registered a single-season, career-low three sacks — that maybe the game had passed the veteran pass-rusher by.

Cole had to learn an entirely new defense this offseason, as the Eagles switched to a 3-4 hybrid. Suddenly, a man who had been asked only to rush the passer his entire career was being told to drop back in coverage, potentially matching up against running backs and tight ends.

"I told myself in the beginning of the year that I was going to make it work regardless," said Cole. "Hard work pays off, man. If you work hard, good things will happen."

His strip-sack of Carson Palmer on the Cardinals' first series in Sunday's 24-21 win set the tone for the whole game. Later, he added another sack to boost his 2013 total to five, including two straight weeks with two-sack performances. Apparently, old dogs can learn new tricks.

Cole's second sack against Arizona moved him into second place on the Eagles' all-time list, tied with Clyde Simmons at 76. A respectful Cole downplayed that honor.

"Well, it's great — just numbers, though," Cole said. "It's about where we're at on the year, as a team, winning games and knowing what this team can do, and we're doing it."

As the longest-tenured player on the Eagles, Cole has seen it all. While he wasn't totally open to changing all aspects of his game at first, Cole has taken defensive coordinator Billy Davis' teachings to heart.

"I have watched Trent put pressure on the quarterback the whole season," said Davis. "I kept telling him that the sacks were going to come. Now, they are coming. Trent always collapses his side of the pocket. Turnovers and sacks always come in bunches, and he is working on getting them."

By the numbers

2.18

The Eagles entered Sunday's game averaging just 2.18 sacks per game, but had five against Arizona, including two each by Cole and Brandon Graham.

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Antionette J Bacon 2313 • Derrick Chandler 2445 • Jonina L Respes 2016

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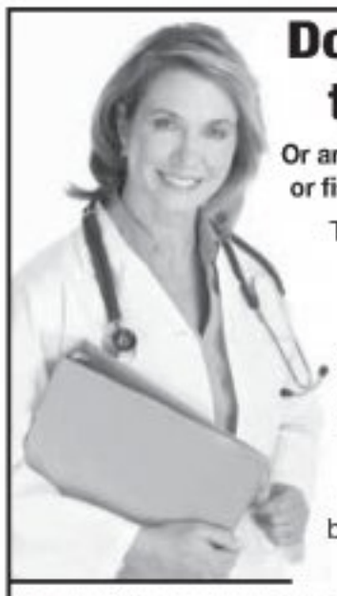

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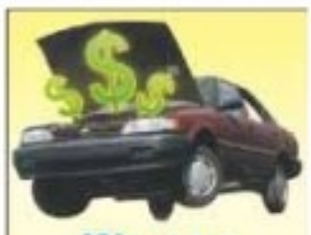

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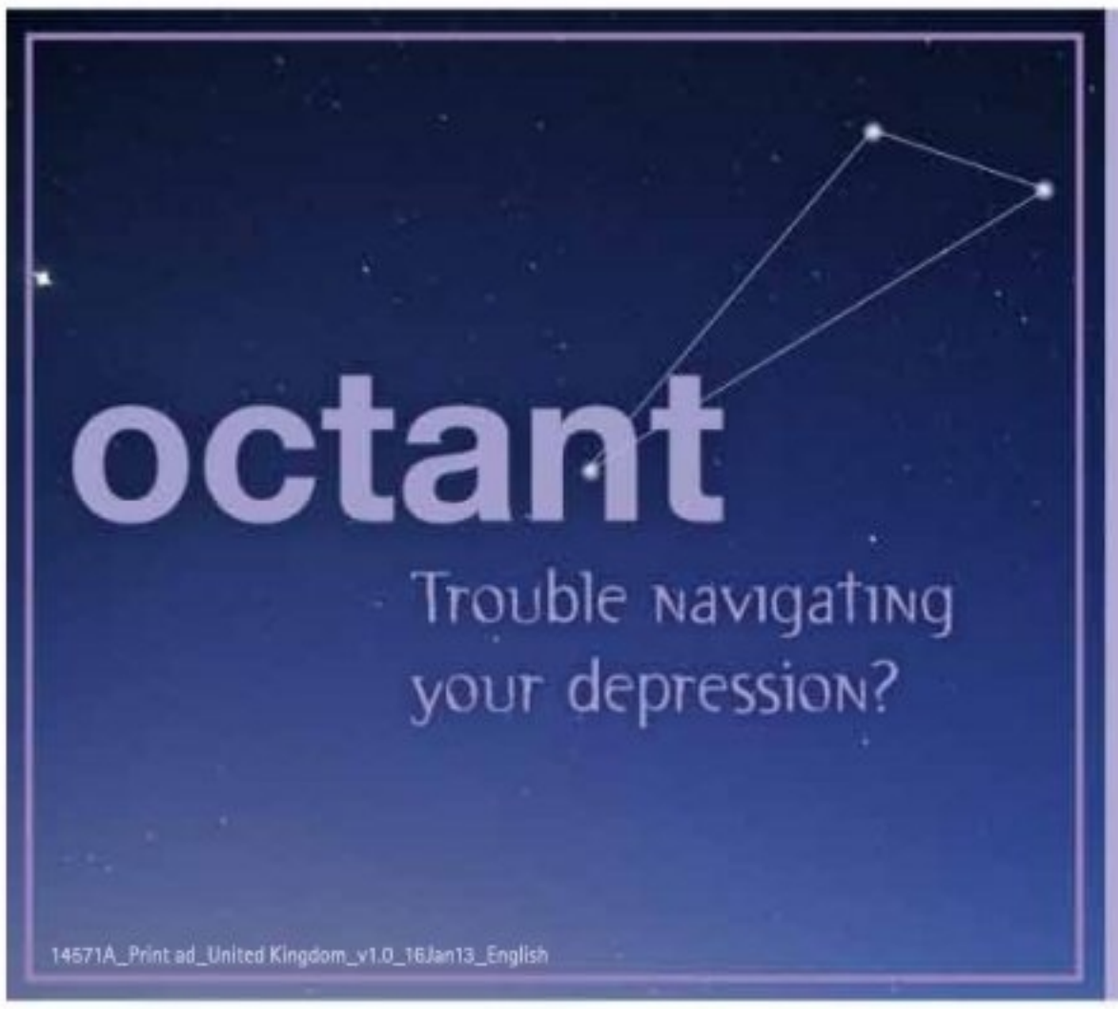

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